

CHAPTER THREE

Hacks and Spooks – Close Encounters of a Strange Kind: A Critical History of the Links between Mainstream Journalists and the Intelligence Services in the UK

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THE MEDIA AND THE SECRET STATE

Alongside the “democratic” state in Britain there exists a secret and highly centralized state occupied by the massively over-resourced intelligence and security services (MI5, MI6, GCHQ, the Cheltenham-based signals spying centre, and the armed forces’ special intelligence sections), secret armies and undercover police units.¹ As Anthony Sampson highlights, MI5 and MI6 are only part of a much wider intelligence community: “This includes private companies, often employing ex-MI6 officers, which have their own interests in cultivating mystery and which rapidly expanded in the 1980s and 1990s, benefitting from the global marketplace.”² For Richard Aldrich, historians have been slow to acknowledge the influence and power of the secret state: “Unlike France, where secret service has always remained a less than respectable activity, consigned to the fringes of government, in post-war Britain it was at the very centre.”³ Paul Todd and Jonathan Bloch in their detailed analysis of global intelligence conclude that “Britain remains the most secretive state in the Western hemisphere.”⁴

The radical historian E.P. Thompson in an early, seminal paper on the emergence of the “secret, unaccountable state within the state”⁵ argues that it had been, paradoxically, “aided by the unpopularity of security and policing agencies.” “Forced by this into the lowest possible visibility, they learned to

develop techniques of invisible influence and control. It was also aided by the British tradition of Civil Service neutrality; this sheltered senior civil servants from replacement or investigation when administrations changed, and afforded to their policies the legitimization of “impartial, non-political intent.”

Significantly, in their analysis of the contemporary secret state, Stephen Dorril and Robin Ramsay gave the media a crucial role. They identified the heart of the secret state as the security services, the cabinet office and upper echelons of the Home and Commonwealth Offices, the armed forces and Ministry of Defence, the nuclear power industry and its satellite ministries together with a network of senior civil servants. As “satellites” of the secret state, their list included “agents of influence in the media, ranging from actual agents of the security services, conduits of official leaks, to senior journalists merely lusting after official praise and, perhaps, a knighthood at the end of their career.”^{6,7}

Yet examining the links between Fleet Street journalists and the intelligence services is incredibly difficult. Only a few researchers and journalists (significantly all male) – such as Stephen Dorril, author of a seminal history of MI6,⁸ David Leigh and Richard Norton-Taylor of the *Guardian*, Martin Bright of the *Observer*, freelance journalist Paul Lashmar, investigative reporters Nick Davies, Mark Hollingsworth, Phillip Knightley, John Pilger and Robin Ramsay, editor of the alternative journal, *Lobster* – have managed to penetrate, but only slightly, the fog that envelops the work of the spooks.

THE LEGAL FOUNDATIONS OF THE SECRET STATE: BEYOND THE GLARE OF THE PROBING MEDIA

Significantly, from the 1980s onwards, a raft of legislation has both reinforced the secret state’s growing powers and protected it from probing media. The 1989 Security Services Act (actually drafted by MI5 lawyers) placed the service on a statutory basis for the first time and provided it with legal powers to tap phones, bug and burgle houses and intercept mail.⁹ The *UK Press Gazette* commented (6 September 1993): “The greatest invasion of privacy is carried out every day by the security services, with no control, no democratic authorisation and the most horrifying consequences for people’s employment and lives. By comparison with them the press is a poodle.”¹⁰

The 1989 Official Secrets Act (OSA) replaced the 1911 OSA, which had proved notoriously cumbersome, particularly after civil servant Sarah Tisdall was jailed in 1983 for leaking to the *Guardian* government plans for the timing of the arrival of cruise missiles in England. Then followed the acquittal of top civil servant Clive Ponting charged under Section 2 (1) of the OSA after he leaked

information showing the government had misled the House of Commons over the sinking of the Argentinean ship, the *Belgrano*, during the Falklands conflict of 1982. The 1989 Act covered five main areas: law enforcement, information supplied in confidence by foreign governments, international relations, defence, and security and intelligence. The publishing of Ponting-style leaks on any of these subjects was banned. Journalists were also denied a public interest defence. Nor could they claim in defence that no harm had resulted to national security through their disclosures.

The Intelligence Services Act of 1993 created the Intelligence and Security Committee which meets in secret to overview services' activities, reporting to the prime minister and not parliament. Following the 1996 Security Service Act, MI5's functions were extended to "act in support of the prevention and detection of crime." The incoming Labour government then moved to extend the powers allowing the intelligence services and other government agencies to conduct covert surveillance.

The system of Defence Advisory Notices (better known as D Notices) also serves to restrain the media in their coverage of sensitive security issues.¹¹ Once a notice is issued by the secretary of the Defence, Press and Broadcasting Advisory Committee, editors are asked to censor reporting. The system, introduced in 1912 to prevent breaches in security by German spies, is entirely voluntary.¹² There are five notices in all: covering the operations, plans and capabilities of the UK armed forces, the nuclear industry, emergency underground oil reserves, and so on.¹³ Around 800 media professionals have a copy of the official list (though it is available on the web at www.btinternet.com/~d.a.notices). In July 2000, the new D Notices secretary, Rear Admiral Nick Wilkinson, said the system was "not allowed to stifle debate about politically sensitive matters." And in November 2007, Simon Bucks, associate editor of Sky News Online and vice-chair of the Defence, Press and Broadcasting Advisory Committee, commented:

Some people, mainly from civil liberty groups, have been critical of the system in the past – accusing it of indulging in cosy self-censorship. But the media members of the current committee are no pussycats and demand firm evidence that national security is threatened before agreeing to government requests... The current secretary, Air Vice-Marshal Andrew Valliance (whose contact details are also on the website), takes an independent line sometimes to the chagrin of the MoD.¹⁴

Some critics argued in 1999 that the harassment of former *Sunday Times* defence correspondent Tony Geraghty after he refused to submit his book, *The Irish War*, for clearance exposed the myth of the "voluntary" system. Geraghty became the first journalist charged under the new OSA after he revealed the extent of the army's surveillance operations and MI5's dirty tricks in Northern Ireland. In the

sections the army particularly did not like, *The Irish War* mentioned the army's Caister/Crucible computers, which contain intelligence data on most people living in Northern Ireland; the Vengeful computer, which tracks vehicle movements around the province; and the Glutton TV camera system, which scans and automatically reads number plates of vehicles at locations as far apart as Derry, Dover and Gretna Green.¹⁵ The charges against Geraghty were eventually dropped— and later, in November 2000, so were those against Col. Nigel Wyld, one of his alleged contacts.

The *Sunday Times* Northern Ireland editor, Liam Clarke, was also summoned by the police special squad after his newspaper was prevented by an injunction from publishing allegations of further dirty tricks by the army's Force Research Unit – a clandestine cell set up to handle informants in the IRA (Irish Republican Army) and Loyalist paramilitary groups.¹⁶ According to Robin Ramsay, Clarke fell victim to the rivalries between the RUC (**Royal Ulster Constabulary**) Special Branch and the army, with the RUC leaking to the *Sunday Times* details of the series of assassinations in Northern Ireland by the army's Force Research Unit. "A barrow-load of official secrets have been exposed by this one. We have the extraordinary situation in which one arm of the British secret state is trying to bust the journalist concerned, Liam Clarke, for leaking information given to him by another of the state's secret arms."¹⁷

NEWSPAPERS "PLAYTHINGS OF MI5"

While it might then be difficult to identify precisely the impact of the spooks (variously represented in the press as "intelligence," "security," "Whitehall" or "Home Office" sources) on mainstream politics and media, from the limited evidence it looks to be enormous. As Roy Greenslade, media blogger at the *Guardian* and editor of the *Mirror* at the time of the Gulf crisis in 1991, commented: "Most tabloid newspapers – or even newspapers in general – are playthings of MI5."¹⁸ Journalist, former MI6 officer and Soviet spy Kim Philby once said that MI6 had penetrated the "English mass media on a wide scale," running agents in the *Daily Telegraph*, *Sunday Times*, *Daily Mirror*, *Financial Times* and the *Observer*.¹⁹ Spy novelist John le Carré, who worked for MI6 between 1960 and 1964, has even claimed that the British secret service then controlled large parts of the press – just as they may do today.²⁰

Investigative journalist David Leigh²¹ has recorded a series of instances in which the secret services manipulated prominent journalists. He mentions reporters are routinely approached by intelligence agents: "I think the cause of honest journalism is best served by candour. We all ought to come clean about these

approaches and devise some ethics to deal with them. In our vanity, we imagine that we control these sources. But the truth is that they are very deliberately seeking to control us.” Leigh identifies three ways in which the secret intelligence service (SIS) manipulates journalists:

- They attempt to recruit journalists to spy on other people or attempt to themselves go under journalistic “cover.”
- They allow intelligence officers to pose as journalists “to write tendentious articles under false names.”
- And “the most malicious form”: they plant intelligence agency propaganda stories on willing journalists who disguise their origin from readers.

John Simpson, BBC world affairs editor,²² describes in his autobiography how he was once approached by a “man from MI5.” “At some point they might make me broadcast something favourable to them. Or they might just ask me to carry a message to someone. You never knew,” he said. But Simpson adds: “It doesn’t do journalists any good to play footsie with MI5 or the Secret Intelligence Service; they get a bad reputation.” *Observer* foreign correspondent Mark Frankland talks in his autobiography of his time in SIS in the late 1950s:²³ “Journalists working abroad were natural candidates for agents and particularly useful in places such as Africa where British intelligence was hurrying to establish itself.”

Bill Norris, former Africa correspondent of the *Times* and associate director of the media ethics campaigning body PressWise, says: “I will not wear a uniform, carry a gun or act as a spy for my own government or any other. Yet I have known reporters who will do any or all of these things and regard them as perfectly ethical.”²⁴ He tells of the time when working for the *Times* in the 1960s, he was asked to spy for his country by the military attaché at the British High Commission in Lagos. He turned down the offer, much to the surprise of the colonel. “I later learned that his offer had been taken up by one of my colleagues on a rival paper.”

Jonathan Bloch and Patrick Fitzgerald, in their examination of covert UK warfare, report the editor of “one of Britain’s most distinguished journals” as believing that more than half its foreign correspondents were on the MI6 payroll.²⁵ And in 1991, Richard Norton-Taylor revealed in the *Guardian* that 500 prominent Britons paid by the CIA and the now-defunct Bank of Credit and Commerce International included 90 journalists.²⁶ Many journalists have admitted wanting actually to become spies: Taki, the *Spectator*’s “High Life” correspondent, has confessed he tried to become a CIA agent after he found out that his father had been one. The BBC *Newsnight* presenter Jeremy Paxman admitted that he had approached an SIS recruiter at university but was turned down.²⁷

MI5 certainly kept a close eye on all BBC staff between 1948 and 1985 through a vigorous system of vetting.²⁸ From Room 105 on the first floor of Broadcasting House, in London, the BBC employed a security liaison officer, known as “Special Assistant to the Director of Personnel” who sent the names of all successful job applicants to MI5’s C Branch that checked these against the records. Not even the Home Secretary knew of this vetting. Thus Lord Rees was shocked when it was revealed in the *Observer* in 1985. Hollingsworth and Fielding report, “The practice was abolished soon after its public disclosure. Today only the director general and two senior executives are vetted by MI5 as they are considered key personnel in the event of a national emergency.”²⁹ Currently MI5 has 33,000 dossiers on individuals and groups considered “security risks,” and 95,000 files on people and organizations that have received “protective security advice.” But on top of these official figures, the security services have hundreds of thousands of other closed files on microfiche.³⁰

ORWELL AND THE SPOOKS

Going as far back as 1945, George Orwell, no less, became a war correspondent for the *Observer* and *Manchester Evening News* – probably as a cover for intelligence work. Significantly most of the men he met in Paris on his assignment were working for intelligences services of one kind or another. One of them was Malcolm Muggeridge who introduced him to P.G. Wodehouse.³¹ Muggeridge had been assigned to keep watch on the comic novelist who was suspected of having Nazi sympathies following his broadcasts in the summer of 1941 from Berlin for the American CBS network.³² Orwell had written an article in defence of Wodehouse in February just before leaving on his assignment (though it was not published until July in the *Windmill* magazine) and may simply have wanted to express his admiration to the creator of Jeeves and Bertie Wooster.³³

Malcolm Muggeridge (1903–1990) began his journalistic career as Moscow correspondent for the *Manchester Guardian* and during the Second World War served in the British Secret Intelligence Services in Brussels, Lourenco Marques in Portuguese, East Africa and Paris where he was assigned to watch the comic novelist P.G. Wodehouse. Later he worked closely with the Information Research Department (IRD) and the CIA-funded Congress for Cultural Freedom and *Encounter* magazine.³⁴ During the late 1940s he was the *Daily Telegraph*’s Washington correspondent and became its deputy editor before a four-year stint (1953–1957) as editor of the satirical journal *Punch*.

Orwell also met the philosopher (and fellow old Etonian) A.J. “Freddie” Ayer, who was in Paris for the Secret Intelligence Service (MI6) since they were

particularly concerned about the danger of a Communist coup.³⁵ Another writer Orwell saw was Ernest Hemingway whom he had previously met in Barcelona during the Spanish Civil War. The American novelist, who was serving as a war correspondent and staying at the Paris Ritz, had close links with members of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS, the forerunner of the CIA) and his son, Jack, was member of the OSS.³⁶ Carlos Baker's account of the meeting in his biography of Hemingway,³⁷ based on a letter he wrote to the critic Hervey Breit on 16 April 1952, only adds to the mystery: "Orwell looked nervous and worried. He said he feared that the Communists were out to kill him and asked Hemingway for the loan of a pistol. Ernest lent him the .32 Colt that Paul Willerts had given him in June. Orwell departed like a pale ghost."

Orwell's possible links with MI5 have been explored in detail by West.³⁸ West reports a "retired CIA officer in Washington" asserting that Orwell worked for MI5 and suggests that he could have developed contacts with Maxwell Knight, head of MI5's Department B5(b) counter-subversion unit and a former pupil of Orwell's prep school, St Cyprian's in Eastbourne. Yet Anthony Masters³⁹ makes no reference to Orwell in his biography of Knight. Speculation about Orwell's links with the secret services intensified after Sheldon reported in his biography of Orwell⁴⁰ that he had drawn up a "little list" of 35 people, briefly (and somewhat crudely) identifying their political leanings, religious affiliations, sexual preferences and possible Communist sympathies.⁴¹ According to Lashmar and James,⁴² Orwell supplied the list to his friend and the sister-in-law of the author Arthur Koestler, Celia Kirwan (née Paget) in 1949 when she was working for the secret state's propaganda unit, the IRD, recently established by the Labour government. However, Newsinger notes,⁴³ "It is most unlikely that Orwell realized the real nature of IRD at the time." Kirwan denied that the list ever reached the Foreign Office.⁴⁴

WAS ORWELL'S 1945 WAR ASSIGNMENT AN INTELLIGENCE MISSION?

Perhaps the closest clues to Orwell's possible intelligence links lie in his extremely close friendship with David Astor, the millionaire *Observer* journalist whose father owned the newspaper and who was to be its celebrated editor from 1948 to 1975. Astor served with the covert Special Operation Executive (SOE) and thereafter maintained close links with intelligence. Both Cockett⁴⁵ and Crick⁴⁶ report that Astor had been determined to meet Orwell after reading his *Lion and the Unicorn* (1941) and finally secured an introduction to him through Cyril Connolly, an old Etonian friend of Orwell, who was then editing the influential journal *Horizon* and filling in for the *Observer's* literary editor. They met in a café

near the BBC off Portland Place where Orwell was working on broadcasts to India. “They quickly became friends, recognizing each other’s directness and simplicity and David seeing him as an intellectual guide and companion.” After leaving the BBC in November 1943, Orwell planned to report for the *Observer* from Algiers and Sicily following the Allied landings, but the authorities turned him down on health grounds. Orwell then quickly acquired the post of literary editor at the leftist weekly *Tribune*, which he held until February 1945 when he resigned to take on the war reporting assignment.

Was it a cover for an intelligence mission? Dorril⁴⁷ reports that in 1944 Astor was transferred to a unit liaising between SOE and the resistance in France, helping the French underground in London spread the word to groups throughout Europe. Most significantly, while in Paris, perhaps inspired by Astor, Orwell attended the first conference of the Committee for European Federation, bringing together resistance groups from around Europe. The French novelist and editor of *Combat*, Albert Camus was among those present. Bernard Crick, in his seminal biography of Orwell (1980), comments interestingly that there was a “curious lack of letters to any of his friends while in France and Germany and none of them can remember him talking about the time.”⁴⁸ So Orwell was, indeed, strangely secretive about the assignment. Astor, however, was later adamant that Orwell had no intelligence links⁴⁹ and Peter Davison, editor of Orwell’s twenty-volume collected works, commented: “I doubt if Orwell would be involved with intelligence – but that by no means says he wasn’t.”⁵⁰

JAMES BOND TO THE RESCUE?

Some of the most important research into the links between hacks and spooks has been conducted by Phillip Knightley, author of *The First Casualty* (2000), a seminal history of war correspondents, and *The Second Oldest Profession* (1987), a history of the intelligence services. He has even claimed that at least one intelligence agent is working on every Fleet Street newspaper.⁵¹ In particular Knightley has highlighted the activities, immediately after the Second World War, of the Kemsley Imperial and Foreign Service, better known by its cable address, Mercury. It was part of the Kemsley and then the Thomson chain of newspapers, which provided foreign news and features to papers such as the *Sunday Times* and the *Empire News*.

The head of Mercury was Ian Fleming, celebrated author of the James Bond spy novels. Fleming, who had served in British naval intelligence during the war, controlled a worldwide network of journalists many of whom had war-time intelligence backgrounds. Cedric Salter, formerly of the SOE, was sent to

Barcelona; Ian Colvin (who had close SIS links) to Berlin and Henry Brandon, an “SIS asset,” to Washington. Donald McCormick, formerly in Naval Intelligence became Mercury’s correspondent in Tangier and later foreign manager at the *Sunday Times*. Anthony Terry, the *Sunday Times* man in Bonn, also worked as a Mercury correspondent and as an officer of British intelligence in Berlin and Vienna. Fleming required his correspondents to write regular “situation reports,” or “Sitreps” providing background information – not for publication – about activities in their parts of the world. Fleming’s biographer Andrew Lycett records McCormick saying that material from these Sitreps was “passed on to branches of Intelligence as and when this seemed justified.”⁵² Anthony Cavendish, a former SIS officer, writes, “At the end of the war a number of MI6 agents were sent abroad under the cover of newspapermen. Indeed, the Kemsley press allowed many of their correspondents to co-operate with MI6 and even took on MI6 operatives as foreign correspondents.”⁵³

Eric Downton, a legendary Canadian war correspondent, who worked with Reuters and spent 24 years on the *Daily Telegraph*’s foreign staff, told Knightley ⁵⁴,

During my time with Reuters and the *Telegraph* I was appalled by the extent to which the British news media co-operated with MI5 and MI6 and the widespread use made of British foreign correspondents by Six. Roy Pawley, foreign editor and later managing editor of the *Telegraph*, was a servile lackey of Five and Six. *Telegraph* foreign correspondents were given direct orders to work with Six. When I went to Moscow for the *Telegraph* shortly after Stalin’s death, I was ordered by Pawley – who said Lord Camrose and Michael Berry were aware of these activities – to work for the Six man in the embassy who had the usual cover of press attaché. Before I left London for Moscow I was briefed by Six officials on what they wanted me to do. *The Times* and the *Telegraph*, as I observed it, were particularly close to the intelligence services but all the major British newspapers, and the BBC apparently, had degrees of symbiosis. Presumably this sort of thing still goes on.

According to Richard Norton-Taylor, *Guardian* security specialist, there is a category of people who are particularly attractive to intelligence agencies: “They may be informers, arms dealers, businessmen, even journalists. Their common value is their special access to groups or targets which the agencies have in their sights but cannot reach on their own. And if anything goes wrong, the agencies can always resort to the well-worn defence of ‘plausible deniability’.”⁵⁵ Thus during the later 1950s, MI6 began recruiting on a massive scale anyone (journalists, businessmen, academics) who might be useful on their travels to the Soviet bloc to gather intelligence – and perhaps even help with introductions to Soviet officials who might be “turned.”⁵⁶

IRD: PROPAGANDA ARM OF THE EMPIRE

The release of Public Record Office documents in 1995 about some of the operations of the MI6-financed propaganda unit, the Information Research Department of the Foreign Office, threw light on this secret body – which even Orwell, we saw, had aided by sending them a list of “crypto-communists.” Set up by the Labour government in 1948, it “ran” dozens of Fleet Street journalists and a vast array of news agencies across the globe until it was closed down by Foreign Secretary David Owen in 1977. It was funded, like MI6, by the “secret vote” and was thus beyond parliamentary scrutiny. John Rennie, its second head between 1953 and 1958, was later appointed head of MI6.

IRD distributed across the globe “white” (true), “grey” (partially true) and “black” (false) propaganda, planting smears, lies, false rumours and forged official reports about the Soviet threat in the media. As Phillip Deery commented, “IRD worked hard to ensure that its propagandists—speechwriters, broadcasters, journalists and politicians—used the most effective words and phrases in their articles and speeches.”⁵⁷ And according to John Pilger,⁵⁸

In the anti-colonial struggles in Kenya, Malaya and Cyprus, IRD was so successful that the journalism served up as a record of those episodes was a cocktail of the distorted and false, in which the real aims and often atrocious behaviour of the British was suppressed. Thus the bloodshed in Malaya was and still is misrepresented as a “model” of counter-insurgency; the anti-imperial uprising in Kenya was and still is distorted as a Mau Mau terror campaign against whites; and the struggle for basic human rights in Northern Ireland became and remains a noble defence of order and stability against IRA terror.

By 1960, IRD was the largest and fastest-growing department of the post-war Foreign Office though the official *Diplomatic List* for the year would have given no such indication.⁵⁹ But under Harold Wilson, the Labour Party cut funding to IRD when it took office in 1964, again in 1968 and “slashed” funding in 1970.⁶⁰ The CIA’s expansion in 1965 of the London-based propaganda unit, Forum World Features, with the knowledge and cooperation of British intelligence, was probably a response to the political and financial pressures on IRD (ibid.).

IRD also targeted a number of domestic organisations: its Psychological Warfare Consultations Committee carried out “psychological operations against any peace movements” and planned “intelligence service operations against progressive organisations in England.”⁶¹ Mark Curtis reports on one IRD operation which, with the support of the British ambassador in Jakarta, aided the overthrow of President Sukarno in Indonesia in 1965. “This was part of a wider

British-backed campaign to replace the regime: the result was up to a million deaths in a bloodbath by the Indonesian army and its allies.”⁶²

CIA RECRUITS BRITISH JOURNALISTS

In 1975, following Senate hearings on the CIA, the reports of the Senate’s Church Committee and the House of Representatives’ Pike Committee highlighted the extent of agency recruitment of both British and US journalists. In the States, newspapers such as the *New York Times* had a secret agreement with the CIA to employ at least 10 agents as reporters or clerks in its foreign bureaus.⁶³ Feminist writer and journalist Gloria Steinem was revealed to be a CIA member but never apologized. She said: “In my experience, the agency was completely different from its image; it was liberal, non-violent and honourable.”⁶⁴

The Pike Committee found that 29 per cent of the CIA’s covert operations was directed at “media and propaganda,” meaning that in 1978 the agency had spent in this area as much as the combined budgets of the world biggest news agencies (AP, Reuters and UPI) put together.⁶⁵ Nick Davies, in his remarkable study of MI6 and CIA propaganda arts, notes, “The CIA kept no agents in Reuters, simply because it was British owned, and the CIA recognised that it was MI6 territory. However, when the need arose, the CIA used the MI6 agents in Reuters to place its own stories and Pike concluded that the agency had done this frequently.”⁶⁶

LEAKER KING AND THE PLOT TO OUST PRIME MINISTER WILSON

The most famous whistleblower of all, Peter (*Spycatcher*) Wright, revealed that MI5 had in newspapers and publishing companies agents whose main role was to warn them of any forthcoming “embarrassing publications.”⁶⁷ Wright also disclosed that the *Daily Mirror* tycoon, Cecil King, “was a longstanding agent of ours” who “made it clear he would publish anything MI5 might care to leak in his direction.”⁶⁸ Selective details about Wilson and his secretary, Marcia Falkender, were leaked by the intelligence services to sympathetic Fleet Street journalists. Further false stories claimed Wilson was involved in corrupt land deals and had links with the KGB. Edward Short, deputy leader of the Labour Party and leader of the House of Commons, was also smeared: it was suggested he was involved in tax evasion, channelling secret funds via a Swiss bank account to offshore locations.⁶⁹ Wright commented: “No wonder Wilson was later to claim that he was the victim of a plot.”⁷⁰

King was also closely involved in an extraordinary scheme in 1968 to oust Prime Minister Harold Wilson and replace him with a coalition headed by

Lord Mountbatten.⁷¹ Peter Wright later confessed that just before the 1974 general election he had planned to leak a secret MI5 file on the Prime Minister (codenamed “Henry Worthington”) to the press. “The plan was simple. MI5 would arrange for selective details of intelligence about leading Labour Party figures, but especially Wilson, to be leaked to sympathetic pressmen.”⁷²

In 1994, Stella Rimington, then MI5’s director general, denied the existence of any anti-Wilson plot. But two years later, Lord Hunt, cabinet secretary throughout the 1974–1979 Labour government, told Channel 4’s *Secret History* programme: “There is absolutely no doubt at all that a few malcontents in MI5 who were right-wing, malicious and had serious personal grudges were giving vent to this and spreading damaging and malicious stories about some members of the Labour.”⁷³ Moreover, according to Peter Wright, MI5 always had about twenty senior journalists working for it in the national press. “They were not employed directly by us, but we regarded them as agents because they were happy to be associated with us.”⁷⁴ David Leigh, in *The Wilson Plot* (1989), his seminal study of the smearing of Harold Wilson before his sudden resignation in 1976, quotes an MI5 officer: “We have somebody in every office in Fleet Street.”

Hugh Cudlipp, editorial director of the *Mirror* from 1952 to 1974, was closely linked to intelligence, according to Chris Horrie, in his book about the history of the newspaper.⁷⁵ And Cudlipp played a significant role in the plot to oust Prime Minister Wilson.⁷⁶ Wright also referred to a “senior executive” at the *Mirror* who was controlled by an MI5 Section D4 agent runner. Seamus Milne⁷⁷ reports that Cyril Morten, the *Mirror*’s managing editor, worked closely with MI6 and happily employed an MI6 agent as a *Mirror* photographer. David Walker, the *Mirror*’s foreign correspondent in the 1950s, was named as an MI6 agent following a security scandal while Stanley Bonnett, editor of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament’s journal, *Sanity*, in the early 1980s was exposed as an intelligence agent by whistleblower and former MI5 officer Cathy Massiter in a *20/20 Vision* programme on Channel 4.⁷⁸

THATCHER: THE SPOOKS AND THE MEDIA

Urban reports that during Margaret Thatcher’s years at Number 10 (1979–1990), spending on the intelligence services doubled and MI5 became a key player in the government machinery. Milne comments:⁷⁹ “The cosy relationship between elements of the intelligence service and the right wing of the Tory Party proved to be a vital lubricant in smoothing Margaret Thatcher’s rise to power.” Yet rivalries between the various branches of intelligence could often spill out into the pages of newspapers. For instance, soon after Thatcher became PM in 1979 she sent Sir

Maurice Oldfield, head of MI6, to Belfast to coordinate intelligence. MI5 reacted furiously, considering the appointment of an MI6 chief to oversee their officers in Northern Ireland as a public criticism of their work. As Hollingsworth and Fielding report, “Suddenly, journalists in Belfast were receiving calls from RUC Special Branch alleging that Oldfield was a closet homosexual who combed the towns of Ulster looking to seduce young men. These malicious stories were traced back to MI5.”⁸⁰

Significantly, following his appointment as MI5 director general in 1985, Sir Anthony Duff and Bernard Sheldon, his legal advisor, made special efforts to cultivate close links with the press. Urban reports, “Duff and Sheldon focused their early efforts on the editors of quality newspapers, meeting them for lunch with the aim of convincing them that the service was modern, forward-looking organisation which did not conspire against the Labour Party and was not stuff with KGB agents.”⁸¹

PROPAGANDA AND THE POPISH PLOT

One of the most controversial attempts at media manipulation by the CIA occurred following the attack on Pope John Paul II in Rome in May 1981. In September 1982, an article appeared in *Reader's Digest* by Claire Sterling, a conservative journalist, and Paul Henze, former CIA station chief in Turkey, claiming that the would-be assassin was a Turk, Mehmet Ali Agca, who, they said, was working for Bulgarian intelligence, and thus ultimately for the Soviet Union. In the context of Cold War rivalries, this was an explosive story. For two years, the allegations were picked and recycled in Britain and across the global media. Later, the story was revealed to have been fabricated.⁸²

MAXWELL AND MOSSAD — AND FURTHER REVELATIONS

According to Stephen Dorril, intelligence gathering during the miners' strike of 1984–1985 was helped by the fact that during the 1970s MI5's F Branch had made a special effort to recruit industrial correspondents — with great success.⁸³ *Guardian* journalist Seumas Milne claimed that three-quarters of Fleet Street's industrial correspondents were at that time agents for MI5 or for Scotland Yard's Special Branch.⁸⁴ MI5 was also suspected of leaking smears to the Robert Maxwell-owned *Daily Mirror* as part of an elaborate disinformation campaign against the miners' leaders Arthur Scargill and Peter Heathfield in 1990. Both were accused of using Libyan funds to pay the mortgages on their homes during

the earlier strike.⁸⁵ There was one major problem with the story: neither Scargill nor Heathfield had mortgages!

In 1991, just before his mysterious death, *Mirror* proprietor Robert Maxwell (born Abraham Lajbi Hoch in Czechoslovakia in June 1923) was accused by the US investigative journalist Seymour Hersh in his book, *The Sampson Option*,⁸⁶ of acting for Mossad, the Israeli secret service, though Dorril suggests his links with MI6 were equally strong.⁸⁷ In particular, Maxwell was suspected of orchestrating the discrediting and exposure of Mordechai Vanunu after he revealed the existence of Israel's nuclear programme in the *Sunday Times* of 5 October 1986.⁸⁸

Further evidence of journalists' links with intelligence emerged in investigations by British Customs after the collapse of the Bank of Credit and Commerce International (BCCI) amidst allegations of massive fraud and money laundering. The CIA, for instance, relied on the Saudi Arabian government to fund anti-Communist groups such as the Contras in Nicaragua and Unita in Angola through secret BCCI accounts..⁸⁹

Following the resignation of Richard Gott from the *Guardian*, its literary editor in December 1994 in the wake of allegations that he was a paid agent of the KGB, the role of journalists as spies suddenly came under the media spotlight – and many of the leaks were fascinating. For instance, according to the *Times* editorial of 16 December 1994, “Many British journalists benefited from CIA or MI6 largesse during the Cold War.”

The intimate links between journalists and the secret services were highlighted in the autobiography of the eminent newscaster Sandy Gall.⁹⁰ He reports without any qualms how, after returning from one of his reporting assignments to Afghanistan, he was asked to lunch by the head of MI6. “It was very informal, the cook was off so we had cold meat and salad with plenty of wine. He wanted to hear what I had to say about the war in Afghanistan. I was flattered, of course, and anxious to pass on what I could in terms of first-hand knowledge.”⁹¹

BAZOFT AMBIVALENCES

Another major controversy erupted in March 1990 following the hanging of *Observer* journalist Farzad Bazoft in Iraq on charges of spying.⁹² An explosion had destroyed the Al-Iskandrai weapons complex 30 miles south of Baghdad on 17 August 1989 and Bazoft had travelled there with an English nurse, Daphne Parish,⁹³ taking photographs and even soil samples. After being arrested by Iraq security police, he had “confessed” (allegedly under torture) to being an Israeli spy.⁹⁴ Immediately following the hanging, British intelligence leaked information that Bazoft had stolen £500 from a building society ten years earlier. According

to John Pilger, MI5, acting on behalf of the Thatcher government, was “desperate for any excuse not to suspend its lucrative arms deals with Saddam Hussein.”⁹⁵

The *Sun*’s “exclusive” headline went, “Hanged man was a robber”; the *Daily Mail*’s “Bazoft a perfect spy for Israel”; *Today*’s, “Bazoft was an Israeli agent”; and a *Sunday Telegraph* editorial condemned Bazoft as a spy, likening investigative journalism as an offence against the state. The investigative journalist Simon Henderson also argued that Bazoft was a spy for British intelligence. He had been provided with special containers for soil samples by a contact at the British embassy in Baghdad who later sent the samples to London by diplomatic bag for chemical analysis.⁹⁶ Henderson concluded, “At no time did the British admit that Bazoft had been spying, nor did Iraq flesh out its allegations. The reason was clear: if Britain admitted to spying the two countries would have had to break off diplomatic relations.” Neither country wanted this. “So the Bazoft incident was left to die down.”⁹⁷ But the veteran BBC foreign correspondent John Simpson argues strongly that Bazoft “was precisely what he claimed to be – a journalist looking for a good story”.⁹⁸ A few months after the execution, in August 1990, Iraqi forces invaded neighbouring Kuwait thus provoking the international crisis that ultimately led to the Gulf conflict of 1991.

Yet the Bazoft mystery continues. In 2003, the *Observer* tracked down Kadem Askar, the colonel in the Iraqi intelligence service who conducted the first interrogation of Bazoft. He claimed he knew the journalist was innocent – but could not stop Saddam Hussein, the Iraqi President, who was determined to have Bazoft executed.⁹⁹

A RENEGADE SPOOK REVEALS ALL

In December 1998, Labour MP Brian Sedgemore named Dominic Lawson, editor of the *Sunday Telegraph*, in parliament as an MI6 agent after receiving information from former MI6 officer Richard Tomlinson.¹⁰⁰ The *Guardian* also reported that Lawson had published articles in the *Spectator* while he was editor by a “Ken Roberts,” who was actually an MI6 officer, and by Alan Judd aka Alan Petty, another MI6 officer. Machon adds, “Although Lawson has denied the claims that he was a paid agent of MI6, we do know that he regularly and uncritically reproduces stories from MI6 sources in the *Sunday Telegraph*.”¹⁰¹

Another major controversy erupted in 2001 after Tomlinson published *Russia, Big Breach: From Top Secret to Maximum Security*, in which he claimed spies posed as journalists on four out of every ten missions.¹⁰² Tomlinson, who was assigned to Yugoslavia during the height of the Bosnian conflict, used a forged card of the National Union of Journalists to gain access to top Serbian sources. Tomlinson

also confirmed that MI6 still set up news agency “fronts” to provide cover for its operations. For instance, in 1992, the Truefax agency was set up in central London by Tomlinson and a KGB defector with the aim of recruiting Russian journalists to spy for Britain.

In the reporting of Northern Ireland, there have been longstanding concerns over security service disinformation. Susan McKay, editor of the Dublin-based *Sunday Tribune*, has criticized the reckless reporting of material from “dodgy security services.” She told a conference in Belfast in January 2003 organized by the National Union of Journalists and the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission “We need to be suspicious when people are so ready to provide information and that we are, in fact, not being used.”¹⁰³

GROWING POWER OF SECRET STATE

Thus from this evidence alone it is clear that there has been a long history of links between hacks and spooks in both the UK and US. But as the secret state grows in power, through massive resourcing, through a whole raft of legislation – such as the Official Secrets Act, the anti-terrorism legislation, the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 and so on – and as intelligence moves into the heart of Blair and Brown’s ruling clique, so these links are even more significant.¹⁰⁴

Mark Almond, lecturer in modern history, commented: “More than any predecessor, Blair has relied on a kitchen cabinet in Downing Street but one made up of a cabal of diplomats and intelligence officials rather than ambitious, if unelected party apparatchiks. Blair has liberated British politics from the influence of politicians.”¹⁰⁵ Professor David Beetham has similarly highlighted the “secret, warfare” state which has totally undermined the democratic system.¹⁰⁶

Since 11 September 2001 all of Fleet Street has been awash in warnings by anonymous intelligence sources of terrorist threats. The former UN arms inspector, Scott Ritter, revealed in his book, *Iraq Confidential*, the existence of an MI6-run psychological warfare effort, known as Operation Mass Appeal. According to Ritter, “Mass Appeal served as a focal point for passing MI6 intelligence on Iraq to the media, both in the UK and around the world. The goal was to help shape public opinion about Iraq and the threat posed by WMD.”¹⁰⁷ MI6 propaganda specialists, at the time, claimed they could spread the misinformation through “editors and writers who work with us from time to time.” Thus there have been constant attempts to scare people – and justify still greater powers for the national security apparatus.

To take just one example, Michael Evans, the *Times* defence correspondent, reported on 29 November 2002, “Saddam Hussein has ordered hundreds of his

officials to conceal weapons of mass destruction components in their homes to evade the prying eyes of the United Nations inspectors.” The source of these “revelations” was said to be “intelligence picked up from within Iraq.” Early in 2004, as the battle for control of Iraq continued with mounting casualties on both sides, it was revealed that many of the lies about Saddam Hussein’s supposed WMD had been fed to sympathetic journalists in the US, Britain and Australia by the exile group, the Iraqi National Congress.

In his evidence to a Special Immigration Appeal Commission in July 2002, the *Observer* reporter and intelligence expert Martin Bright highlighted the way in which journalists were constantly fed unverifiable information by the intelligence services about alleged Al Qaeda threats to the UK. To illustrate his point he referred to an article in the *Independent* of 16 September 2002 headlined “MI5 searches for terror cells based in Britain” by two journalists with “impeccable reputations,” Paul Lashmar and Chris Blackhurst:

They report that at least three terrorist cells linked to Bin Laden are at large in Britain and that the UK has been a major base for Bin Laden’s operations. They add that there are believed to be dozens of terrorists in Britain associated with Bin Laden. One “intelligence source” is then quoted as saying: “There is no reason why what happened in America couldn’t happen in Britain or any European country. The terrorists are in place, and there is very little to stop them.” A source, this time from “Whitehall” adds: “The problem is, these groups are amorphous and hard to identify until the they commit a terrorist act.” This is terrifying stuff.¹⁰⁸

Stephen Dorril reports on how journalists would be given secret briefings or access to Iraqi defectors and would take them at their word, even though defectors are the most unreliable of all sources.¹⁰⁹ He lists a series of manufactured stories carried in the lead-up to the Iraq invasion – the three giant cargo ships said to be carrying Iraqi weapons of mass destruction (*Independent*, 19 February 2003); “Saddam ‘killed missile chief’ to thwart UN team” (*Sunday Telegraph*, 2 March 2003) and “Saddam’s Thai gen spree hints at getaway plan” (*Sunday Times*, 9 March 2003).

SEXED UP — AND MISSED OUT

During the controversy that erupted following the end of the “war” and the death of the arms inspector Dr David Kelly (and the ensuing Hutton inquiry), the spotlight fell on BBC reporter Andrew Gilligan and the claim by one of his sources that the government (in collusion with the intelligence services) had “sexed up” a dossier justifying an attack on Iraq. The Hutton inquiry, its every twist and turn massively covered in the mainstream media, was the archetypal media spectacle

that drew attention from the broader and more significant issue of mainstream journalists' links with the intelligence services.

On 26 May 2004, the *New York Times* carried a 1,200-word editorial admitting it had been duped in its coverage of WMD in the lead-up to the invasion by dubious Iraqi defectors, informants and exiles. Chief among the *Times*' dodgy informants was Ahmad Chalabi, leader of the Iraqi National Congress and a Pentagon favourite before his Baghdad house was raided by US forces on 20 May 2004. Then, in the *Observer* of 30 May 2004, David Rose admitted he had been the victim of "calculated set-up" devised to foster the propaganda case for war. "In the 18 months before the invasion of March 2003, I dealt regularly with Chalabi and the INC and published stories based on interviews with men they said were defectors from Saddam's regime." And he concluded, "The information fog is thicker than in any previous war, as I know now from bitter personal experience. To any journalist being offered apparently sensational disclosures, especially from an anonymous intelligence source, I offer two words of advice: *caveat emptor*."¹¹⁰ No British newspaper has followed the example of the *New York Times* and apologized for being so easily duped by the intelligence services in the run-up to the illegal invasion of Iraq.

Rose, in a later article in the *New Statesman*, reported in detail on how the "spooks" had fed a series of lies to their media cronies: in one instance, an official insisted the preachers Abu Hamza and Abu Qatada – now said by the same agency to have been Britain's most dangerous men throughout the 1990s – were "harmless rent-a-gobs" who might have a high public profile but had no hard links with jihadist terrorism.¹¹¹ MI5 sources also originally claimed there was "no connection" between the 7/7 cell behind the London bombings and the failed 21/7 cell. "Only two years later, thanks to evidence given in criminal trials, did it become clear that both claims were false. In fact, the two leaders of the 7/7 gang, Mohammad Sidique Khan and Shahzad Tanweer, had been observed by MI5 surveillance officers at least four times, and were known to be connected to another, now convicted, terrorist cell." Rose asks why the media have been duped by the intelligence services for so long.

One reason, aside from the lunches and the limos, is that editors are extremely reluctant to lose the access they have: the spooks' stories may be unreliable, but they often make good copy, and if everyone is peddling the same errors, it doesn't much matter if they turn out to be untrue. Another, as a seasoned BBC correspondent put it to me, may be a judgment that if MI5 and MI6 sometimes peddle disinformation, many viewers and readers may not very much care as "we're all on the same side."

Significantly in 2007, a new research, information and communication unit (modelled on the IRD) was set up by Home Secretary John Reid to target the BBC and other media outlets as part of a counter-offensive against Al Qaeda.¹¹²

CONCLUSION: HOW CONSPIRACY THEORY CAN BE USEFUL

One of the main problems with intelligence is that anyone attempting to highlight its significance is accused of lacking academic rigour and promoting “conspiracy theory.”¹¹³ Jeffrey M. Bale commented that, “serious research into genuine conspiratorial networks has at worst been suppressed, as a rule been discouraged and at best looked upon with condescension by the academic community. An entire dimension of political history and contemporary politics has thus been consistently neglected.”¹¹⁴ But given the close links between politicians, journalists and the intelligence services some conspiratorial elements have to be acknowledged to be behind the mainstream media’s reporting.

With the emphasis on intelligence, the focus of journalism shifts from objective, verifiable “facts” to myth: in effect, there is a crucial epistemological shift. As general Richard Myers, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, admitted in the lead-up to the Iraq invasion of 2003, “Intelligence doesn’t mean something is true. You know, it’s your best estimate of the situation. It doesn’t mean it’s a fact. I mean, that’s not what intelligence is.”¹¹⁵ And Stephen Dorril commented, “The reality is that intelligence is the area in which ministers, and the MI6 info ops staff behind them can say anything they like and get away with it. Intelligence with its psychological invite to a secret world and with its unique avoidance of verification is the ideal means for flattering and deceiving journalists.”¹¹⁶

Similarly, the historian Timothy Garton Ash stressed, “The trend in journalism as in politics, and probably now in the political use of intelligence, is away from the facts and towards a neo-Orwellian world of manufacturing reality.”¹¹⁷ With the reporting of the “war on terror” being dominated by intelligence sources, separating the manufactured myths and the misinformation from the truth becomes all the more difficult. But it’s a challenge both journalists and media consumers have to take up.

NOTES

1. Precise figures on funding of the intelligence services are difficult to identify. Mark Hollingsworth and Nick Fielding, *Defending the Realm: MI5 and the Shayler Affair* (London: André Deutsch, 1990), 48, say that with the election of the Labour Party in May 1997 they found “new friends.” “They persuaded the new government to increase their aggregate budget to £743.2 million for 1999–2000, £745 million for 2000–2001 and £746.9 million for 2002–2003. The amount for MI5 alone was not published until 1998 when it was announced as £140 million a year.” However, Paul Todd and Jonathan Bloch, *Global Intelligence: The World’s Secret Services Today* (London: Zed Books, 2003), 106, calculate that, following leaks from the National Audit Office about overspends – from £140 to £250

- million (MI6) and £85 to £227 million (MI5) – on high-profile city offices and a range of other scandals involving IT contract overruns, an unofficial estimate of £2.5 billion to be closer to the mark. Todd and Bloch suggest that the cost of the intelligence services is Britain's "greatest secret." An earlier, excellent study of the intelligence services and their manipulation of the media appeared in David Leigh, *The Frontiers of Secrecy: Closed Government in Britain* (London: Junction Books, 1980).
2. Anthony Sampson, *Who Runs This Place? The Anatomy of Britain in the 21st Century* (London: John Murray, 2004), 151.
 3. Richard Aldrich, *Espionage, Security and Intelligence in Britain 1945–1970* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1998), 3.
 4. Todd and Bloch, *Global Intelligence*, 102.
 5. E.P. Thompson, *Writing by Candlelight* (London: Merlin Press, 1980), 156–157.
 6. Stephen Dorril and Robin Ramsay, *Smear! Wilson and the Secret State* (London: Fourth Estate, 1991), x–xi.
 7. Hollingsworth and Fielding (*Defending the Realm*, 49) report that officers of MI5's H Branch ("Corporate Affairs") interact with GCHQ, the police, customs, ports and immigration services and are responsible for liaising with the media.
 8. Stephen Dorril, *MI6: Fifty Years of Special Operations* (London: Fourth Estate, 2000).
 9. See Todd and Bloch, *Global Intelligence*, 102. The foreign intelligence service, SIS, was first officially acknowledged in the House of Commons on 6 May 1992 and put on a statutory footing with the Intelligence Services Act of 1994.
 10. Mark Urban, *UK Eyes Alpha: The Inside Story of British Intelligence* (London: Faber, 1996), 53. Urban, of BBC's *Newsnight*, is a former military intelligence officer (see Hollingsworth and Fielding, *Defending the Realm*, 43).
 11. Liberty and Article 19, *Secrets, Spies and Whistleblowers: Freedom of Expression and National Security in the United Kingdom* (London: Liberty and Article 19, 2000), 22–24.
 12. See its website at www.dnotice.org.uk.
 13. Ed Sheldon, "Public Exposure," *Press Gazette*, 5 May 1999.
 14. Simon Bucks, "DA-Notice Voluntary Code under Threat from the Net," *Press Gazette*, 16 November 2007. <http://www.pressgazette.co.uk/story.asp?sectioncode=1&storycode=39465> (accessed 1 January 2008).
 15. See Duncan Campbell, "Led by the Nose," *Guardian*, 2 November 2000. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2000/nov/02/freedomofinformation.uk> (accessed 7 March 2008).
 16. Richard Norton-Taylor, "Secrets and Spies," *Guardian*, 18 May 2000.
 17. Robin Ramsay, *Politics and Paranoia* (Hove: Picnic Publishing, 2008), 253.
 18. Seamus Milne, *The Enemy Within: The Secret War Against the Miners* (London: Pan Books, 1994), 262.
 19. Nick Davies, *Flat Earth News* (London: Chatto and Windus, 2008), 235.
 20. Stephen Dorril, *The Silent Conspiracy: Inside the Intelligence Services in the 1990s* (London: Heinemann, 1993), 281.
 21. David Leigh, "Britain's Security Services and Journalists – The Secret Story," *British Journalism Review*, vol. 11, no. 2 (2000): 21–26. www.bjr.org.uk/data/2000/no2_leigh.htm (accessed on 14 October 2006). It also appeared in the *Guardian* of 12 June 2000 under the title "Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Journalist."

22. John Simpson, *Strange Places, Questionable People* (London: Pan Books, 1998), 296–297.
23. Mark Frankland, *Child of My Time* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1999), 92.
24. Bill Norris “Media Ethics at the Sharp End,” *Ethics and Media Culture: Practice and Representations* (edited by David Berry) (Oxford: Focal Press, 2000), 329.
25. Jonathan Bloch and Patrick Fitzgerald, *British Intelligence and Covert Action* (London: Junction Books, 1983), 134–141.
26. John Pilger, *Heroes* (London: Pan Books, second edition, 1983), 496.
27. Phillip Knightley, “Journalists and Spies: An Unhealthy Relationship,” *Ethical Space: The International Journal of Communication Ethics*, vol. 3, nos. 2 and 3 (2006): 7–11.
28. Alan Protheroe, former Assistant Director General of the BBC, was also a Territorial Army intelligence officer specializing in army-media relations. See Ramsay, *Politics and Paranoia*, 188.
29. Hollingsworth and Fielding, *Defending the Realm*, 105.
30. *Ibid.*, 114.
31. Gregory Wolfe, *Malcolm Muggeridge: A Biography* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1995). See also Muggeridge’s autobiography *Chronicles of Wasted Time Vol 2: The Infernal Grove* (London: Fontana, 1975), 256–257.
32. Frances Donaldson, *P.G. Wodehouse: A Biography* (London: Carlton Publishing Group, 1982/2005).
33. Richard Keeble, “Orwell as War Correspondent: A Reassessment,” *Journalism Studies*, vol. 2, no. 3 (2001): 393–406.
34. See Frances Stonor Saunders, *Who Paid the Piper? The CIA and the Cultural Cold War* (London: Granta Books, 1999).
35. A.J. “Freddie” Ayer, *Part of My Life* (London: Oxford University Press, 1978). Ben Rogers, *A Life: A.J. Ayer* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1999), 192.
36. Charles Whiting, *Hemingway Goes to War* (Stroud: Sutton, 1999), 104.
37. Carlos Baker, *Ernest Hemingway: A Life Story* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972), 672–673.
38. W.J. West, *The Larger Evils: Nineteen Eight-Four: The Truth behind the Satire* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1992), 162–166.
39. Anthony Masters, *The Man Who Was M: The Life of Maxwell Knight* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1984).
40. Michael Shelden, *Orwell: The Authorised Biography* (London: Heinemann, 1991), 467–469.
41. Saunders, *Who Paid the Piper?*, 298–301.
42. Paul Lashmar and Oliver James, *Britain’s Secret Propaganda War 1948–1977* (Stroud: Sutton, 1998), 97. This is the most detailed study of the activities of IRD to date.
43. John Newsinger, “The American connection: George Orwell, ‘Literary Trotskyism’ and the New York Intellectuals,” *Labour History Review*, vol. 64, no. 1 (1999): 23–43.
44. In a letter to the author from Peter Davison dated 24 February 1999.
45. Richard Cockett, *David Astor and the Observer* (London: Deutsch, 1991), 94.
46. Bernard Crick, *George Orwell: A Life* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1982), 425–426.
47. Dorril, *MI6: Fifty Years of Special Operations*, 457.
48. Crick, *George Orwell*, 481. See also Gordon Bowker, *George Orwell* (London: Little, Brown, 2004), 324–326. Bowker’s is probably the best biography of Orwell.
49. In an interview with the author, London, November 1999.

50. In a letter to the author dated 7 December 1999.
51. Richard Keeble, "Spooks Are Represented on Every Newspaper," *Press Gazette*, 9 October 2003.
52. Andrew Lycett, *Ian Fleming* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1996), 170.
53. Knightley, "Journalists and Spies," 8.
54. Ibid.
55. Dorril, *The Silent Conspiracy*, 274.
56. Ibid., 275.
57. Phillip Deery, "The Terminology of Terrorism: Malaya 1948–52," *Journal of South East Asian Studies* (June 2003). http://www.accessmylibrary.com/coms2/summary_0286-4205179_ITM (accessed 11 June 2008).
58. John Pilger, *Hidden Agendas* (London: Verso, 1998), 495–496.
59. Aldrich, *Espionage, Security and Intelligence in Britain*, 2–3.
60. Dorril and Ramsay, *Smear! Wilson and the Secret State*, 110.
61. Mark Curtis, *Unpeople: Britain's Secret Human Rights Abuses* (London: Vintage, 2004), 107.
62. Ibid.
63. Peter Preston, "The Spooks Who Ruled the States," *Observer*, 3 February 2008.
64. Ibid.
65. Davies, *Flat Earth News*, 226.
66. Ibid. For further details on the CIA's penetration of the mainstream media in the US see Greg Bish, "The Covert News Network" in *You Are Being Lied to: The Disinformation Guide to Media Distortion, Historical Whitewashes and Cultural Myths* (edited by Russ Kick) (New York: The Disinformation Company, 2001), 40–43. For instance, a leaked internal CIA memo, dated 20 December 1991, boasted that the agency had "contacts with every major wire service, newspaper, news weekly and television network in the nation."
67. Peter Wright (with Paul Greengrass), *Spycatcher: The Candid Autobiography of a Senior Intelligence Officer* (London: Viking, 1987).
68. Ibid., 369.
69. Hollingsworth and Fielding, *Defending the Realm*, 22.
70. Wright, *Spycatcher*, 370.
71. Andrew Marr, *A History of Modern Britain* (London: Pan Macmillan, 2007), 305–308. See also Scott Newton, "Harold Wilson, the Bank of England and the Cecil King 'coup' of May 1968," *Lobster* (Winter 2008–2009): 3–8.
72. Hollingsworth and Fielding, *Defending the Realm*, 23.
73. Ibid.
74. See British intelligence and the covert propaganda front. <http://nelsonmandela2.blogspot.com/> (accessed on 14 June 2008).
75. Chris Horrie, *Tabloid Nation: From the Birth of the Daily Mirror to the Death of the Tabloid* (London: Deutsch, 2004), 237.
76. Newton, "Harold Wilson, the Bank of England and the Cecil King 'coup' of May 1968," 7.
77. Milne, *The Enemy Within*, 263.
78. Urban, *UK Eyes Alpha*, 46–47. Dorril, *The Silent Conspiracy*, 25–28.
79. Milne, *The Enemy Within*, 341.
80. Hollingsworth and Fielding, *Defending the Realm*, 123.
81. Urban, *UK Eyes Alpha*, 54–55.

82. Davies, *UK Eyes Alpha*, 229.
83. Dorril, *The Silent Conspiracy*.
84. Milne, *The Enemy Within*.
85. Robin Ramsay, "The Miners and the Secret State," in *Shafted: The Media, the Miners' Strike and the Aftermath* (edited by Granville Williams) (London: Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom, 2009), 73–80. Roy Greenslade, then editor of the *Daily Mirror*, later apologized for his role in the Scargill smear affair. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/media/2002/may/27/mondaymediasection.politicsandthemedial> (accessed on 6 April 2009).
86. Seymour Hersh, *The Sampson Option* (London: Faber and Faber, 1991).
87. Dorril, *The Silent Conspiracy*, 276. Russell Davies, in *Foreign Body: The Secret Life of Robert Maxwell* (London: Bloomsbury, 1995), 21–25, records how Maxwell's publishing ventures had begun in collaboration with the German company, Springer-Verlag, and bankrolled by the Secret Intelligence Service. Funding was organized through Hambro's bank – and Charles Hambro had been a member of the Secret Operation Executive, the covert military organization set-up by Churchill during the Second World War. George Kennedy Young, the future Deputy Chief of MI6, was responsible for "running" Maxwell while based in Vienna. Desmond Bristow, a former SIS officer, says of Maxwell, "I know he was kept on very sort of – how would we put it? – discreetly by MI6 for quite a long time. Probably, in fact, till the end of his days." Davies also records (p. 213) the *Guardian* reporting that communications from Maxwell's yacht "were intercepted by GCHQ, with the help of British submarines, after a tip-off from the CIA in the late eighties that he was suspected of being involved in arms deals. His conversations were sent by low frequency transmission to GCHQ's outstation at Edzell on Tayside, Scotland."
88. Maxwell's *Sunday Mirror* had run a "spoiler" on Vanunu a week before the *Sunday Times*' exclusive, presenting him as a con man pushing false stories about Israel's nuclear secrets. See Roy Greenslade, *Maxwell's Fall: The Appalling Legacy of a Corrupt Man* (London and New York: Simon and Schuster, 1992), 329. But Greenslade argues that Maxwell was not a Mossad agent and that Hersh had been misled by his source, Ari Ben Manashe, a former Mossad agent and arms dealer.
89. *Ibid.*, 300.
90. Sandy Gall, *News from the Frontline: A Television Reporter's Life* (London: Heinemann, 1994).
91. *Ibid.*, 158.
92. Richard Keeble, *Secret State, Silent Press: New Militarism, the Gulf and the Modern Image of Warfare* (Luton: John Libbey, 1997), 62.
93. Daphne Parish gives her version of events in *Prisoner in Baghdad* (London: Chapman Publishers, 1992). She was sentenced to 15 years in prison but released on 16 July 1990 following the intervention by the Zambian President Kenneth Kaunda at the request of the *Observer's* owner "Tiny" Rowland.
94. See Kenneth R. Timmerman, *The Death Lobby: How the West Armed Iraq* (London: Fourth Estate, 1992), 357–358.
95. John Pilger, "Shedding Crocodile Tears," *New Statesman*, 20 March 1992.
96. See also Dilip Hiro, *Desert Shield to Desert Storm: The Second Gulf War* (London: Paladin/HarperCollins, 1992), 67–68.

97. Simon Henderson, *Instant Empire: Saddam Hussein's Ambition for Iraq* (San Francisco: Mercury House, 1991), 214–216. Rupert Allason, the former Conservative MP, who writes on espionage as Nigel West, also commented: “It is highly likely Bazoft will have tried to capitalize on his knowledge and background by offering information to the Israelis. Mossad [the Israeli secret service] almost certainly snapped him up, and might well have been unaware of his criminal background.” (see Hiro, *Desert Shield to Desert Storm*, 69).
98. John Simpson, *From the House of War* (London: Arrow Books, 1991), 54–65.
99. See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Farzad_Bazoft (accessed on 11 July 2008).
100. Annie Machon, *Spies, Lies and Whistleblowers* (Lewes, East Sussex: The Book Guild, 2005), 135.
101. *Ibid.*, 136. See Ramsay, *Politics and Paranoia*, 253–254 for more on the *Telegraph's* links with the spooks.
102. Paul Lashmar, “My Name’s James Bond: Here’s My Nuj Card. British Spies Posing as Journalists Make Genuine Foreign Reporters’ Jobs Much More Difficult,” *Independent*, 30 January 2001.
103. See <http://www.nuj.org.uk/inner.php?docid=635> (accessed on 14 October 2006).
104. See Richard Keeble, *Ethics for Journalists* (London: Routledge, second edition 2008), 254–255 on the implications of the Blair government’s anti-terrorism legislation for investigative journalism in the UK.
105. Mark Almond, “So How Will He Be Judged,” *Guardian*, 15 May 2003. Ramsay (*Politics and Paranoia*, 250) comments on the intelligence links of the Blair clique: “Within his inner group, we have Peter Mandelson, who has been around MI6 since his early 20s, and Jonathan Powell, ex-FCO [Foreign and Commonwealth Office] in Washington... Four of the Blair cabinet are alumni of the Anglo-American Project; three of the Blair cabinet have passed muster at Bilderberg meetings; and the entire defence team in Blair’s cabinet in 1997 were members or associates of the Trade Union Committee for European and Transatlantic Unity, created by the Americans in the 1970s – probably, though not yet probably created by the CIA – and currently funded by NATO.”
106. David Beetham, “The Warfare State,” *Red Pepper*, June 2003.
107. Davies, *Foreign Body*, 231. See also Michael Meacher, “The Very Secret Service,” *Guardian*, 11 November 2003. The government later admitted the existence of Mass Appeal. See “Revealed: How MI6 Sold the Iraq War,” Nicholas Rufford, *Sunday Times*, 28 December 2003. See: <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/uk/article839897.ece> (accessed on 14 October 2006).
108. Martin Bright, “Terror, Security and the Media,” *Observer*, 21 July 2002. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2002/jul/21/humanrights.comment> (accessed on 14 October 2003).
109. Stephen Dorril, “Spies and Lies,” in *Tell Me Lies: Propaganda and Media Distortion in the Attack on Iraq* (edited by David Miller) (London: Pluto Press 2004), 112.
110. David Rose, “Iraqi Defectors Tricked Us with WMD Lies, but We Must Not Be Fooled Again,” 30 May 2004, *Observer*. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/media/2004/may/30/Iraqandthedia.iraq> (accessed on 14 October 2006).

111. David Rose, "Spies and Their Lies," *New Statesman*, 27 September 2007.
112. See Alan Travis, "Revealed: Britain's Secret Propaganda War against Al-Qaida," *Guardian*, 26 August 2008. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2008/aug/26/alqaida.uksecurity> (accessed on 6 April 2009).
113. Robin Ramsay, *Conspiracy Theories* (Harpenden, Herts: Pocket Essentials, 2000).
114. Jeffrey Bale, "Conspiracy Theories and Clandestine Politics," *Lobster* (Hull 1995): 16–22.
115. Andrew Stephen, "America," *New Statesman*, 4 August 2003.
116. Dorril, "Spies and Lies," *Free Press*, April, 4. <AQ: Please provide year>
117. Timothy Garton Ash, "Fight the Matrix," *Guardian*, 5 June 2003.